COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
CONSEIL DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

RECORD

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Meet the members of Council for 2002-2003
SEE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT INSIDE

Number of applicants to Ontario universities up 46.7%

Universities prepare for arrival of first class of double cohort graduates this fall

As of the January 15, 2003 deadline for Ontario secondary school students to submit applications to be eligible for guaranteed consideration for the first round of admissions, a total of 101,668 students had submitted an application to an Ontario university for fall 2003 admission.

This year's impressive number of applicants represents a 46.7% increase compared to last year's cycle at the same time and 69.9% as compared to 2001. This number is expected to increase slightly by the end of the cycle.

The double cohort — a product of secondary school reform that will see graduates of the old five-year curriculum and the new four-year curriculum seeking university admission at the same time — has had the most significant influence on the volume of applications. Two other factors, however, are also contributing to the surge in enrolment that will continue over the decade: rising participation rates and an increase in the 18- to 24-year-old population.

Now that the size of the double cohort is known, Ontario universities will continue to work with government to increase their enrolment capacity, and focus on the remaining challenge of securing funding for quality improvements.

The second phase of the admission cycle has now begun, with Ontario universities in the process of acknowledging a remarkable 515,983 different university and/or program applications. Each applicant had the option to apply for up to three programs per institution at up to 19 Ontario universities for a possible total of 57 choices. While it is possible that program selection limits may be imposed in the future, this year individuals with 10 or more choices submitted a total of over 20,800 program selections.

Every year there are many applicants who end up registering in the program and university of their choice — most recent figures place 40% of students in this category. And every year there are students who end up with offers of admission that may be their second or lower choice. There has always been strong competition for high-demand programs, and that competition will be even greater with larger numbers of applicants. The percentage of secondary school applicants who receive an admission offer and actually register at an Ontario university characteristically ranges (based on available data from the past ten years) from 65% to 71% of total applicants.

The goal is to ensure that qualified high school graduates from both the old and new curricula will have a place in an Ontario university, and to

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OUAC Fine-Tunes Online Application Process for Ontario Secondary School Students

The process of applying to university has been made easier for the double cohort thanks to the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC), which has introduced an online application system for Ontario secondary school students, its largest applicant division.

OUAC field-tested its online system with high school applicants seeking university admission in fall 2002. Seven school boards encompassing 36 schools and approximately 3,000 students province-wide participated in the pilot project. Information sessions for counsellors who wanted to review the process first-hand were also scheduled throughout the province. OUAC used the pilot results to fine-tune its online application process in time for the onrush of applications from double cohort students seeking admission in fall 2003.

More than 700 of Ontario's approximately 900 secondary schools registered with the Centre to allow their students to apply online for fall 2003 admissions. Eighty-four percent of Ontario secondary school applicants chose the new electronic option to meet the January 15, 2003 deadline. The remaining 16% applied by hard-copy form prior to November 29, 2002.

The online process worked so efficiently that, even with the significant increase in volume — close to 50% more applications — OUAC required fewer additional staff than in previous years, and Ontario universities received the bulk of their application data much earlier than last year.

Except for a slower response rate a few days before the deadline when as many as 4,000 applications were received daily, OUAC's substantially upgraded computer system experienced no significant wait times. Moreover, during the peak weeks of the application cycle, the Centre's help desk was staffed until 11 p.m. most nights as well as weekends, with trained technical staff on duty to assist several thousand anxious applicants.

SuperBuild Creates Spaces for Additional Students

In February 2000, the Government of Ontario launched the historic SuperBuild investment program for the postsecondary sector. The program represents the largest public capital investment in Ontario's colleges and universities in more than 30 years. The government's first round of SuperBuild, combined with the efforts of Ontario universities, is expanding the universities' capacity to provide spaces for growing numbers of students during the double cohort years and beyond. To date, SuperBuild has allocated $891 million to help colleges and universities construct new academic buildings and upgrade existing teaching facilities to accommodate additional students.

In 2002, responding to revised, higher enrolment projections for the double cohort years, the government announced a new call for SuperBuild proposals "to increase the number of student spaces where they are needed." Universities were invited to submit proposals to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) by the end of this January. Twenty-three proposals have been submitted, representing an aggregate total of 30,950 spaces at a cost of $318 million in capital support. It is hoped that MTCU will announce the successful proposals in March.

ensure that applicants from both cohorts are treated in a fair and equitable manner. As has always been the case, students will be considered for admission on the basis of individual merit.

March is the earliest that admissions decisions will be issued. It is expected that the majority of decisions will go out in late April and May, which will allow universities to receive and evaluate second-semester interim grades.

The latest date that a university can respond to an application is June 4, 2003, while students have until June 16, 2003 to respond to any offer(s) of admission, thereby enabling them to make their decisions based on a complete picture of their options.

Ontario universities will continue working with government to consider not only how they can accommodate qualified students, but also how government can provide the additional resources to ensure that double cohort students receive the quality university education that is central to their ability to succeed as students and as Ontarians.

Ontario Finance Minister featured speaker at OPAS Business Leaders Forum

L to r: Dr. Norm Sheldon, Executive Director of OPAS; Carol Stephenson, OPAS Board Chair; The Honourable Janet Ecker, Minister of Finance; and Dr. Mordechai Rozanski, Chair of Council and President of the University of Guelph.

On January 24, 2003, the Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS) hosted the 2003 Business Leaders Forum at the Toronto Board of Trade with Janet Ecker, Ontario's Minister of Finance, as the featured speaker.

In her address, entitled *Ontario's Role in the Knowledge Economy*, Minister Ecker discussed the current state and future outlook of the Ontario economy. She stressed the critical importance of further investment in education, at both secondary and postsecondary levels, to ensure an adequate, ongoing supply of highly skilled and qualified workers. Ms. Ecker added that it was equally important to maintain a financial climate in which businesses recognize the value of investing and expanding in Ontario to create more job opportunities. A question-and-answer session followed the presentation.

The Minister was introduced by Carol Stephenson, CEO of Lucent Technologies of Canada and Chair of the OPAS Board of Directors, and thanked by Mordechai Rozanski, Chair of COU and President of the University of Guelph. Approximately 130 invited guests from the business, university and government communities attended this year's forum — the fifth in a series designed to facilitate the exchange of information and views on key issues affecting both industry and universities.

Public surveyed on perceptions of quality in Ontario universities

Faculty, tuition costs, government funding top concerns, says new study

In February 2003, EKOS Research Associates published a COU-commissioned study on public perceptions of quality in Ontario universities. Data were compiled through telephone interviews with a random sample of 1,307 Ontario residents age 16 and older. The study builds on earlier findings from COU's participation in EKOS's *Rethinking Government* study (late summer 2001), and expands on the linkages between quality and other issues, particularly enrolments and funding. The latest report, entitled *Public Perceptions on Quality*, summarizes the study's key findings under four categories.

Broad Perceptions

The majority of Ontarians (86%) overwhelming believe that the province's universities should be public institutions.

Ontarians see a positive relationship between universities and employment, generally leaning toward the view that the focus of a university should be on advancing knowledge rather than on training.

Perceptions of Quality

Teaching is the key factor that resonates most strongly in the minds of Ontarians when thinking about "quality" and "university."

Ontarians also view a wide range of factors as important for providing a high-quality university education, and many acknowledge the need to allocate resources to improve quality.

Since the 2001 study, the importance of factors that ensure quality has increased. This is largely due to the advent of the double cohort — those who are concerned about its impact are much more likely to assign importance to virtually all of the quality factors.

Ontarians continue to be favourably disposed toward rating the quality of Ontario universities, and those who have attended an Ontario university are even more favourable in their assessment.

Meeting the Enrolment Challenge

Many of those Ontarians who are most concerned about the double cohort give a higher priority to quality than access. Quality is viewed as a very important issue, even if it means turning some qualified students away.

Those Ontarians who are most concerned about the double cohort are also the most likely to feel that resources need to be allocated to areas beyond classroom spaces, and that adequate classroom space is only part of the equation in meeting the enrolment challenge.

Many Ontarians are unaware of the extent of the enrolment challenge. While most are aware that enrolments have been increasing and will continue to do so over the next 10 years, less than half are aware that enrolments will continue to increase after the double cohort-related surge has passed, while many of those who feel enrolments are increasing are not aware of the double cohort.

Although most Ontarians feel that access to Ontario universities has become more difficult over the past 10 years, and the vast majority have concerns about the impact of the double cohort on access, just one third also feel admission standards are too high.

Funding

A strong majority believe that attending university in Ontario is becoming too expensive.

With a widespread view that governments are underfunding universities and high concerns about the expense of attending university, there is broad-based support among Ontarians for increased government funding — even if it means a tax increase or reduction of resources allocated to other areas.

Few Ontarians are aware of the actual level of government funding for Ontario universities.

Ontarians show strong support for a high-quality accessible university system that is both public and well-funded by governments.

While most Ontarians view elementary and secondary schools as taking the highest funding priority for improvements in quality, a sizeable minority say universities should take the highest priority.

The study's overall findings provide strong support for COU's quality agenda. According to most Ontarians, ensuring the availability of sufficient classroom space is not enough to meet the enrolment challenge. A high-quality university system must be maintained and, in the view of the vast majority, increased public funding will be required to do so.

For a copy of the report, visit COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca).

$6-million endowment funds women's health studies

Eight women's health scholars were recognized by the Ontario Women's Health Council in 2002 through a major new awards program. The program, made possible by a $6-million endowment from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, was established "to build a mass of women's health scholars," says Jane Pepino, a Toronto lawyer and women's health advocate who chairs the Council.

It is anticipated that this community of award-winning scholars will foster a climate of scientific excellence in generating new knowledge about women's health and in translating that knowledge into improved health for women, more effective health services and products for women, and an overall strengthened health care system.

The first recipients of the annual Women's Health Scholar Awards are Marianne van den Heuvel, University of Guelph; Alison Shea, McMaster University; Angela Stewart, University of Ottawa; Suzanne Cadarette, University of Toronto; Valerija Raic Borcic, University of Toronto; Lori Ross, University of Toronto; Shannon Zumstaff, University of Windsor; and Asse Ukkal, York University. The awards program is administered by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, an affiliate of COU that ensures quality standards in graduate programs across Ontario.

The Ontario Women's Health Council had already worked at establishing university chairs in women's health when it determined that scholarship also had to be supported at the earlier graduate levels to ensure that more future academics in the discipline were coming up from the ranks.

Prizes of $5,000 and grants of up to $50,000 can go toward tuition fees, office space and other research-related expenses for academics engaged in women's health concerns.

CEO of TD Bank Financial Group featured speaker at Visionary Seminar

Charles Baillie, Chair and CEO of TD Bank Financial Group, was presented with the 2002 Visionary Award by the Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS) on November 25, 2002. The occasion was OPAS's sixth annual Visionary Seminar, held this year at Queen's University where Mr. Baillie serves as chancellor.

In an address entitled *From Vision to Reality — Our Country, Your Future*, Mr. Baillie shared his vision of Canada as a country "where we have the resources to make choices, as Canadians, about the kind of educational system we want, the kind of health care we want and the kind of environment we want." To be in a position to make these choices, he argued, "we need to be financially strong — and the only way we shall possess that financial wherewithal is to raise our standard of living."

Mr. Baillie's address and the award presentation were broadcast via satellite and live webcast to 22 campuses across Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta, reaching an audience of more than 3,000 faculty, students and business leaders. Bell Canada, an OPAS partner, sponsored this and last year's Visionary Seminar.

For a copy of Mr. Baillie's address, visit the OPAS web site (www.opas-partnerships.com).

Former U of T president, COU chair honoured with Smith Award

J. Robert S. Prichard, President and CEO of the Torstar Media Group, President Emeritus of the University of Toronto and former chair of COU, is the recipient of the second annual David C. Smith Award for Significant Contribution to Scholarship and Policy on Higher Education in Canada.

The Reverend Mary Smith, widow of David Smith, presented the award to Mr. Prichard at a dinner held in Toronto on October 17, 2002. Invited to deliver an address on a subject related to the theme of the award, as all honourees are, Mr. Prichard spoke on the changing policy landscape of postsecondary education and reinforced the need to advance a comprehensive quality agenda.

Attendees at the awards dinner included Rev. Smith's daughter Monica and son-in-law Brad Martin, government representatives, special guests and members of Council.

The David C. Smith Award celebrates the distinguished contributions of the late Dr. Smith to Canadian scholarship and policy in higher education.

Award recipient Robert Prichard with presenter Rev. Mary Smith, widow of David Smith in whose memory the award was established.

Resounding success for Ontario Universities' Fair

Attendance up by over 60% from previous year

University-bound students research their options at this year's fair. Students were in need of educational information that exceeded last year's, which led to sellouts of their supplies of brochures to keep up with the demand.

Last September, an estimated 75,000 people attended the sixth annual Ontario Universities' Fair — an increase of more than 60% from 2001's then-record turnout of 47,000. All of Ontario's universities as well as the Ontario College of Art & Design, the Royal Military College of Canada and the newly established University of Ontario Institute of Technology were represented at the admission-free fair.

Each institution featured a display centre where admissions, student services, academic and student representatives were available to answer questions and provide information to high school students and parents. Each institution also presented information sessions, scheduled throughout the three days of the fair, on a range of topics from programs and admission requirements to life on campus.

Ontario universities also provided a record volume of take-away information and material on their undergraduate programs, with individual institutions handing out an average of 40,000 brochures. The demand for information was so high that universities ordered extra shipments of brochures delivered to the fair site.

The event is an important tool for the universities in communicating key information to double-cohort students and their parents gearing up for the university application process.

The annual fair is organized by COU's Standing Committee on Secondary School Liaison as part of the University Information Program. The 2002 fair, held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, was co-chaired by Charmaine Hack at Ryerson University and Doug Leeves of the University of Toronto.

The 2003 Ontario Universities' Fair will be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre from September 25 to 27.

Bridging the gap between policy and research

MPPs and researchers meet in first of a series of breakfast seminars

Last fall saw the launch of a series of breakfast seminars designed to "bridge the gap" between policy makers and the research community.

On October 31, 2002, the Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation and the Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR) co-hosted a breakfast seminar for MPPs to raise awareness about science and innovation at Ontario universities and how these activities contribute to provincial prosperity.

On hand to welcome members of the government caucus, university representatives, interested media and invited guests were Minister Jim Flaherty and OCUR Chair Kerry Rowe, Vice-Principal (Research) of Queen's University.

Featured researcher was Deryn Fogg, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, University of Ottawa, who talked about her work in the burgeoning field of catalytic chemistry. Dr. Fogg explained the practical importance of such research by noting that catalysts — highly selective molecular engines that assemble building blocks into complex, highly organized molecules — are the "single enabling technology" shared by innovative new products as diverse as photonic materials, drugs that are free from harmful side effects, and lightweight plastics that are tougher than steel.

Following the presentation, there was further discussion about basic research and how it translates into applied industrial processes that provide both economic and social benefits.

As the recipient of numerous research awards and grants — which have included the Premier's Research Excellence Award, the John C. Polanyi Prize, and funding from both the Ontario Innovation Trust and the Canada Foundation for Innovation — Dr. Fogg drew upon her own personal experience as a funded researcher to emphasize the enormous benefits arising from provincial investment in research.

Innovation and excellence in teaching with technology: Inaugural awards presented at luncheon

University Award: Dr. William Ralph (right) of Brock University receives the University Application Award from Mike Roach, President and CEO of CGI Group, the sponsor of the award.

Workplace Award: Jules Silverthorn, Vice President, Human Resources, IBM presents the award for an outstanding workplace application to Susan Kuzmyk of the Equine Research Centre and Inge Butler of the Office of Open Learning at the University of Guelph. Absent from the presentation was Dr. John Burton of the University of Guelph.

Two awards that recognize innovation and excellence in teaching with technology were handed out by the Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS) at an awards luncheon on October 18, 2002. The first award recognizes a program, course or module designed for university students, while the second recognizes an educational product designed specifically for people in the workforce.

Dr. William Ralph of Brock University was the recipient of the first award, which was sponsored by CGI Group Inc., for his undergraduate course, Journey Through Calculus. The winner of the second award, sponsored by IBM, was Dr. John Burton of the University of Guelph, in partnership with the Office of Open Learning and the Equine Research Centre, for the centre's Equine Science Certificate Program. Both awards are valued at $7,500.

Several presidents and senior representatives from Ontario universities, members of the OPAS Board of Directors, and invited representatives from the business and government communities attended the event, which was held at the University Club of Toronto. The awards are part of OPAS's ongoing commitment to promoting the use of learning technologies among university faculty.

COU hosts annual reception for members of government caucus

On December 2, 2002, COU hosted its third annual reception for members of the provincial government caucus. Mordechai Rozanski, Chair of COU and President of the University of Guelph, and Ian Clark, President of COU, were on hand to welcome some 70 government and university representatives including Deputy Premier Elizabeth Witmer, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Dianne Cunningham, and Ministers John Baird, Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, Brenda Elliott, Jim Flaherty, Doug Galt and Helen Johns.

A focus of this year's reception was a display highlighting the breadth of research and innovation across the disciplines at Ontario universities. Guests also received copies of the 2002 COU publication, *A Sampling of Success Stories of Provincial Investment in University Research*, a capsule introduction to the range and richness of university research supported by the Ontario government. (A follow-up edition will be published by summer 2003, a companion publication highlighting federally supported research is due out this spring.)

COU also distributed its latest progress report, *Access to Excellence: Countdown to the Double Cohort*, which evaluates what progress has been made and what challenges must still be addressed in joint government-university preparations for the arrival of the double cohort. The Ontario Universities' Application Centre gave a presentation on its new online application system for Ontario secondary school students, a time-saving option that has facilitated the processing of a record volume of applications from students applying for fall 2003 admissions.

Success Stories and *Access to Excellence* are both available on COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca).

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FALL 2002/WINTER 2003 COUNCIL UPDATES

Minister Meets with Board Chairs

On January 29, 2003, Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, met with the Council of Chairs of Ontario Universities and COU President Ian Clark to discuss current issues.

Task Force on Student Interuniversity Athletics Created

A new task force was recently established to examine common university sports issues, including awards for student athletes among Ontario University Athletics (OUA) institutions. The Task Force on Student Interuniversity Athletics, chaired by Queen's University Principal William Leggett, will consider factors that affect the competitive strengths of OUA teams, consult with stakeholders and review best practices in other jurisdictions.

Seven-Year Cycle of Undergraduate Program Review Audits Nears Completion

The series of audits of institutional processes for undergraduate program reviews has entered the seventh and last year of its first cycle. With Guelph, McMaster and Wilfrid Laurier universities slated for audits in 2002-2003, all 17 of COU's member universities will have been audited according to the Audit Guidelines established by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents.

Ministers Attend Meeting of OPAS Board of Directors

Two Ontario ministers attended the December 5, 2002 meeting of the OPAS Board of Directors. Jim Flaherty, Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, discussed aspects of his new ministry's mandate and answered questions from the board, while Chris Hodgson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, spoke about his ministry's "Smart Growth" initiatives.

Second Annual Dialogue Between COU Health Sciences Affiliates and Government

On November 29, 2002, representatives of the faculties of nursing, medicine, rehabilitation sciences and pharmacy met with senior officials from the ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Finance, and Training, Colleges and Universities in their second Annual Dialogue. The forum allowed both communities to outline their top priorities for a provincial health human resources planning body.

Member Updates

Dr. Ross Paul has been re-appointed to his second six-year term as President of the University of Windsor. **Dr. Paul Davenport** has been re-appointed to his third five-year term as President of the University of Western Ontario. **Dr. Judith Woodsworth** was officially installed as President of Laurentian University on November 2, 2002, succeeding Dr. Hermann Falter in the post.

Dr. David Marshall, President of Nipissing University, was named North Bay's 2002 Community Builder of the Year by the city's Northgate Square Shopping Centre. This is the second annual presentation of the award recognizing North Bay citizens who have contributed to the community's growth and prosperity. The first recipient of the award was former premier Mike Harris.

Stepped-up licensing and training to aid international medical graduates

A new eight-point plan to add 650 physicians to the health care system over the next five years, most of them international medical graduates (IMGs), was announced by the province last November. The new plan, which will shorten the training/licensing process by which IMGs qualify for practise in Ontario, responds to recommendations from a task force sponsored by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario with representation from the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine. The task force was asked to develop methods to overcome barriers and expand opportunities for doctors, particularly IMGs, who want to practise in Ontario.

Ontario universities represented at Queen's visit to the Festival of Ontario

Jane Mackay, Vice-President of Policy and Analysis, COU, chats with Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, at the Festival of Ontario.

Over 8,000 guests and exhibitors were on hand to welcome Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh to the Festival of Ontario at Toronto's National Trade Centre on October 9, 2002. Some 300 organizations representing the province's diverse economic, social and cultural sectors mounted exhibits at the Festival, which was organized by the province in honour of the Queen's Golden Jubilee year of the throne. COU participated with a display highlighting the coming enrolment surge and SuperBuild campus expansion projects.

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Listing of Committees Associated with the Council of Ontario Universities (COU)

The following is a list of standing committees and their members who help make it possible for the Council of Ontario Universities to achieve its objectives.

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Queen's University

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Dr. Sheila Embleton
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